

Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) Meeting
U.S. EPA Region 5
March 03, 2005

Meeting Participants

Melanie Benjamin, Mille Lacs Band
Don Wedll, Mille Lacs Band
Lisa Farmby, EPA, IEO
Margaret Guerriero, EPA
Scott Wieting, Hannaville Indian Community
David Jones, Huron Potawatomi
Andy Knott, Grand Traverse Bay Bands
Steve Rothblatt, EPA, ARD
Tim Henry, EPA, WD
Stephanie Ogren, LRBOI, Manistee
Katie Stariha, St. Croix
Tadd Johnson, Mille Lacs
Ed Fairbanks, EPA
Jennifer Manville, EPA
Brad Frazier, Grand Portage Band
Tom Pietila, Lac Vieux Desert
Shannon Judd, Grand Portage
Darrel Harmon, EPA/HQ, OAR
Natalene Cummings, Forest County Potawatomi
Elizabeth Rogers, Forest County Potawatomi
Dwight Sargent, Inter-Tribal Council of MI
Mark Parrish, Pokagon Potawatomi
Bert Frey, EPA, ORC
Norman Niedergang, EPA, ORA
Pat Thompson, EPA, WD
John Aquino, TASWER
Nate Guldan, Forest County Potawatomi

Jeff Besougloff, EPA, AIEO
Stan Ellison, Shakopee-Dakota
Bharat Mathur, EPA, ORA
Jeff Mears, Oneida Tribe
Frank Beaver, Little River Band
Chris Berini, Fond du Lac
Michael Tenenbaum, Gun Lake Tribe
Martin Schutt, St. Croix
Rachel Schwarz, LTBB Odawa
Margaret Watkins, Grand Portage
Sarah Slayton, St. Croix
Jane Neumann, EPA, SF
Connie Kevon, Mille Lacs
Greg Bunker, Stockbridge-Munsee
Greg Jonas, Grand Portage Band
Mike Sladewski, Keweenaw Bay
Gary Schuney, Menominee
Clara Gatewood-Brown, OHS/FEMA
David Horak, EPA, STPB
Dan Cozza, EPA, WD
Michael Tenenbaum, Gun Lake
Kelley Moore, EPA, SF
William K. Dew, EPA, IEO
Karen Sykes, EPA, RMD
Gordon Jones, EPA, ARD
Dolly Tong, EPA, WPTD

Welcome and Introductions

Mathur called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. Introductions were made.

RTOC Administrative Business and Updates

A copy of the meeting minutes from the December 01, 2004 were included in the information packet. No changes/additions were offered and the minutes were approved.

Dew reviewed the action items in the RTOC Tracking Matrix.

It was agreed that the June 2005 RTOC meeting would be moved to Friday, June 10, 2005, to coordinate with the National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management (NTCEM) and the National Tribal Operations (NTOC) meeting which will be held in Michigan.

Presentation of the 2005 Taimi Hoag Award

Ellison gave a brief on the formation of the Taimi Hoag award. Mathur and Benjamin presented Don Wedll of the Mille Lacs Band, with the 2005 Taimi Hoag award. Photos were taken.

Benjamin spoke about Wedll and many of the major accomplishments that the Band has had since he's been there and what an asset he is to them.

Wedll thanked everyone involved in the award and stated that it was an honor. Wedll described the early days of environmental programs in Indian Country – the importance of establishing an environmental presence on each reservation, the difficulty of establishing the RTOC, etc. He also stressed that environmental improvements on reservations means environmental protection for everyone.

Tribal Use of STORET

Henry distributed copies of the "Fact Sheet on the Tribal Use of STORET" and notes from the Surface Water Monitoring Standards (SWiMS) meeting, and opened the floor for comments. The Tribal Caucus raised a number of issues related to: privacy concerns, sensitive data, personal location data, and threatened/endangered species. Henry recognized these concerns and suggested that there might be some flexibility and Region 5 would like to look for options. Henry indicated that EPA would like to work with each tribe individually and by 2008 would like to see 20 tribes in STORET. Tenenbaum stated that there is over two decades of data already, so what is the point in continuing to collect new information if the old data has not been used. Henry responded that the data is needed to show trends and Besougloff stated that the Office of Management and Budget wants to determine what difference funding has had on an issue. Beaver asked whether STORET is the best vehicle for the data, or are there alternative systems? Ellison indicated that the Tribal Caucus discussed an EXCEL spreadsheet format.

The RTOC discussed developing a workgroup or using the existing 305b/STORET work group to further evaluate the issue. There was also some discussion on tribes developing a proposed format and submitting to EPA. Henry stated that the Water Division (WD) has monthly calls with the tribes and STORET will continue to be discussed on those calls.

TASWER Presentation

Aquino gave a brief history of how TASWER was formed and stated that it is 100% funded by EPA (CERCLA and RCRA). There are currently 145 tribal members. Schwarz of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Chippewa Indians is the representative for Region 5. A PowerPoint sheet was circulated and Aquino read highlights that were recently accomplished. Schwarz thanked Aquino for coming to the meeting to make the presentation.

Solid Waste and Small Tribes

Guerriero stated that EPA is looking to have regional training on solid waste with the tribes. A joint federal and tribal partnership meeting on solid waste issues will be held in conjunction with the March meeting of the Multi-Agency MOU Work Group. Guerriero will provide an update on Solid Waste at the June RTOC in Michigan.

GAP Resources and Environmental Results

Dew reported that the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2006, includes a reduction of \$4 million in the General Assistance Program. In addition, the FTEs in the Agency's Indian Program would be reduced from 130 to 72. A copy of EPA Order 5800.07 was distributed. Dew also indicated that Region 5 will be working on a comprehensive Tribal Strategy.

Draft Water Division Tribal Strategy

Henry distributed a draft copy of the WD Tribal Strategy and requested tribal review and feedback.

Open Forum

Mathur requested that the environmental staff speak with tribal leaders to determine interest in holding a session at the NTCM to discuss current issues in Indian Country. The session could be coordinated with the RTOC meeting.

Fairbanks thanked Dunning for coming to the meeting and congratulated him on his retirement. Dunning thanked everyone for the many years that he's worked with them.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the RTOC is scheduled for *Friday, June 10, 2005*, and will be held in Traverse City, Michigan, and hosted by the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa.